



Large Jail Network Bulletin

National Center is Source for Information on Jail Technology

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In 1994, Attorney General Janet Reno announced the creation of the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC). Organized as a program of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the Center functions as a clearinghouse to help law enforcement and corrections agencies obtain information regarding appropriate technology.

Attorney General Reno acknowledged the need for a voice at the national level to increase support for state and local justice agencies' acquisition and use of technology. She noted that among the concerns driving the creation of the new program were:

- The absence of a single, unbiased source of technology information for law enforcement and corrections;
- The reality that most agencies cannot afford extensive planning and research units;

- The lack of a centralized procurement agenda; and
- The absence of a major industry specializing in the manufacture of such equipment.

Attorney General Reno pointed out that there is a huge technology infrastructure already in place, paid for by U.S. taxpayers, to respond to the needs of corrections and law enforcement. Because the Departments of Energy and Defense and other federal agencies need some of the same equipment as Justice agencies, a large cost savings can be realized by working together. Leveraging existing resources can keep the cost of the technology within the budgets even of smaller agencies.

NLECTC's Role

Collecting information in the form of publications and reports, catalogs, vendor/manufacturer data, and other material is a central focus of the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center. And, in addition to providing agencies with objective information on new equipment and technologies, the NLECTC assists in locating surplus government equipment that may be available for reassignment.

Although the NLECTC emphasizes emerging technologies, staff also encourage agencies to analyze existing technologies, tools, and equipment to be sure that more effective or innovative uses are not being overlooked. Technologists know that corporate giants with huge research and development budgets are not the only source of promising new technology for law enforcement and corrections. Hundreds of small, private companies—even garage workshop inventors—are submitting exciting new technologies for testing and evaluation. These technologies may well be within the grasp of corrections agencies' budgets because fewer dollars are required for their development.

A National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Advisory Committee and other regional advisory boards comprised of officials from all areas of the criminal justice community provide program direction to the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center.

Organized as one national center with regional offices, NLECTC has five locations. Four centers represent geographical areas of the nation, and one has specific responsibility for border issues. Each center also focuses on specific aspects of technology, although contact with any

office will bring answers to questions on any topic. Constituents will find staff at any center eager to assist with any questions or information within the scope of the entire program's mission.

For example, staff can provide information on what are referred to as "best practice exemplars," agencies using a technology in a particularly effective way and willing to share

their experiences with others. In many cases, referrals are made to other agencies that may also provide assistance in fulfilling a request for information.

More than 25,000 agencies are served by the NLECTC. Services and resources are offered at no cost to state and local agencies.

NLECTC Vision -

- To support technology-based solutions that will enhance the safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of the law enforcement and corrections mission.

NLECTC Mission -

- To facilitate the identification, development, manufacture, and adoption of new products and technology that will serve to enhance the operational capability of the state and local law enforcement and corrections agencies we represent.
- To be a competent and reliable source of information and assistance to our constituents regarding available technology.
- To foster beneficial relationships with our constituents that support an understanding of needs and requirements of their technology.

NLECTC Goals -

- Provide research and technology capability in our focus areas of communications and information systems, explosives detection, crime mapping and ballistic threat assessment.
- Provide a capability for multi-disciplinary involvement by employing the resources of the University of Denver and other appropriate sources of technical assistance.
- Support other focused technology initiatives which may result in the successful development of beneficial technology. ■

What's New in Jail Technology?

New technology is always exciting to learn about, but written descriptions rarely can convey the complexity of effort and the tremendous resources needed to support successful introduction of a new product. Following are some of the new technologies that are potentially useful to jails and are currently in the R&D pipeline:

- Enhanced information tracking of offenders, especially juveniles.
- National on-line offender information system.
- Inmate psychological testing/screening systems.
- Automated motion detection systems not requiring continuous monitoring.
- Digital photo systems.
- Drug detection and screening devices.
- Smart card applications.
- Easier access to Internet technologies.
- Enhanced control systems for technology operations
- Fingerprint and eye/retinal scan systems for positive ID and drug detection.
- Automated and easier access to inmate medical records.
- Effective soft restraints.
- Effective, affordable, and portable weapons and contraband detection systems.
- Anti-terrorism technology for institutional security.
- Improved security systems for transportation of offenders.

- Noninvasive body-cavity search systems.
- Aqueous foam for non-lethal control.
- Laser emitting prisoner incapacitation devices for safe situation control.
- Electronic GPS driven monitoring systems for work release inmates.
- Video teleconferencing systems for inmates and visitors.
- Telemedicine systems for remote diagnosis in medical services.
- Puncture-proof soft body armor for institutional staff use.

As you can see, there are a number of initiatives in place. Some of these technologies are already being site-tested and are nearing the end of the development phase; they will soon be available. Others . . . well, we will need to wait and see what develops. If you would like information on any of these technologies, contact a regional office. (See box, below.) The complete information resources of NIJ/NLECTC can be accessed through any regional center.

In addition, if you have an idea for something that would make your job easier, safer, or more

efficient, Center staff would like to hear from you. Over the next several months, NLECTC staff will be attending local, state, and regional meetings in an effort to make agencies aware of our program resources. If your agency has a meeting or seminar coming up, and you would like an NLECTC staff member to attend and/or conduct a presentation, please call us.

Contact the Center by phone at (800) 416-8086 or e-mail at mmcghee@du.edu, or visit our web site (<http://rmlectc.dri.du.edu>). ■

NLECTC's Sites and Speciality Areas

Rockville, Maryland - National center providing administrative support, conferences, testing and publication services including JUSTNET web site at: <http://www.nlectc.org>; (800) 248-2742.

Northeast Region - Weapons and contraband detection, sensors, and covert tagging and tracking; (800) 338-0584.

Southeast Region - Surplus property, smart card and other corrections technology; (800) 292-4385.

Rocky Mountain Region - Communication and information systems interoperability, ballistics properties and survivability, GIS/GPS crime mapping and explosives detection; (800) 416-8086.

Western Region-Forensic analysis, computer crime, vehicle stopping devices, and counter-terrorism; (310) 336-2222.

Border Research and Technology Center - Interdiction technology, night vision equipment, and portable radios; (619) 685-1491.

Other Specialized Offices Related to the NLECTC

- The **Office of Law Enforcement Technology Commercialization** (OLETC) helps inventors and developers bring relevant new technologies to market. OLETC offers guidance to anyone seeking such assistance and is located in Wheeling, West Virginia; telephone (800) 678-6882.
- The **Office of Law Enforcement Standards** (OLES) develops measurement methods and techniques for voluntary national performance standards on technology; telephone (301) 975-2757. ■